

City of San José
Coyote Valley Specific Plan

Summary of Technical Advisory Meeting #27
March 28, 2007
City Hall, Council Wing Room W-120

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members Present

Michele Beasley (Greenbelt Alliance), Shanna Boigon (Santa Clara County Association of Realtors), Michele Difrancia (HNTB/Joint Powers Board), Steve Fisher (Valley Transportation Authority), Mike Griffis (County Roads and Airports), Trixie Johnson (Friends of the Coyote Greenbelt), Libby Lucas (California Native Plant Society), Elish Ryan (County Parks), Brian Schmidt (Committee for Green Foothills), and Linda Spencer (Almaden Valley Community Association).

City and Other Public Agencies Staff Present

Maria Angeles (Public Works), Matt Weber (ESD), Stan Ketchum (PBCE), Susan Walsh (PBCE), and Stefanie Hom (PBCE).

Consultants Present

Roger Shanks (Dahlin Group), Eileen Goodwin (APEX Strategies), and Bill Wagner (HMH Engineers).

Community Members Present (Additional people were present; however, the names below only reflect individuals who identified themselves on the sign-up sheet.)

Peter Benson, Michael Bini, Michael Clark, Leila Forouhi, Tom Foster, Mark Anthony Mederios, Dennis North, Peter Rothschild, Al Victors, Pamela Vasudeva (VTA), and Jesse Votaw, Lisa Jensen (CSJ Planning Commission).

1. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting convened at approximately 3:05 p.m. with Eileen Goodwin, of APEX Strategies, welcoming everyone to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting. Eileen reviewed the meeting agenda, and described the different types of Coyote Valley Specific Plan (CVSP) meetings that are held. Everyone introduced themselves and indicated what agency they are representing.

2. CVSP Update

Stan Ketchum, Principal Planner with the Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement, indicated that the purpose of the meeting is to get input from the TAC on the CVSP Initial Draft that was released in December 2006. The comments will help in the plan refinement stage, which will start after the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is released. The Draft EIR is expected to be released shortly. There will be Community Meetings held on April 19, 2007 and May 2, 2007 to discuss the Draft EIR.

The Technical Advisory Committee provided the following comments and questions:

- Will we be able to make comments on the EIR at this meeting? *Stan indicated that the purpose of this meeting is only to discuss the Initial Draft. Once the Draft EIR is released, there will be a 60-day commenting period.*

3. Initial Draft CVSP Overview

Susan Walsh, Senior Planner, and Stefanie Hom, Planner I, with the Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement, presented an overview of the Coyote Valley Specific Plan Initial Draft. The Initial Draft is still a work in progress, and there will be a plan refinement process after the Draft EIR is released. The Initial Draft is available on CD from City Staff, and is also posted on the CVSP website at www.sanjoseca.gov/coyotevalley/.

4. Comments/Discussion Initial Draft CVSP

The TAC was asked to respond to five questions regarding the CVSP Initial Draft. The question is listed first, followed by questions and comments provided by the TAC and members of the public.

Question #1: What are your first impressions of the Initial Draft Specific Plan document? How effective are the format and graphics? Is the text clear and understandable?

The TAC provided the following questions and comments:

- The Initial Draft is lacking in technical content. The appendices are not ready and the information on the website is not updated. *Susan indicated that the Initial Draft is still a working draft. There are several placeholders, but they wanted to release it early to get initial comments.*
- Suggested putting the document on the website as one link, as opposed to breaking it up by sections.

Question #2: How effectively does the Plan respond to the “environmental footprint”? How well does the plan accomplish the Guiding Principles of environmental stewardship, open space preservation and sustainability?

- Development on the east side of Monterey Road is a concern. Looking for no development on the east side or at least a smaller footprint of development.
- Runoff from the Coyote Valley Parkway into Fisher Creek is a concern. *Bill Wagner, with HMM Engineers, indicated there would be no direct runoff from the Parkway into Fisher Creek. There would be a 40-foot vegetated swale in between. Water would be treated before it is discharged into Fisher Creek.*
- What are the City’s Agriculture Mitigation policies? *Susan indicated that the need for a Citywide Ag mitigation policy is still under discussion since the policies would apply City-wide, not just in Coyote Valley.*
- A smaller environmental footprint would be ideal.
- Unclear how outside agency input has been incorporated into the plan. *Susan indicated that all comments have been forwarded to the Task Force, staff, and consultants for review in the plan refinement. The current plan needed to remain unchanged in order to prepare the EIR.*
- The language in the Plan for sustainability measures and TDM measures should be revised from “should” to “shall”.
- Cannot answer questions without reviewing the information in the EIR.
- Suggested comparing the Greenbelt Alliance’s “Getting it Right” vision for Coyote Valley with the City’s CVSP Initial Draft. *Susan indicated it would be analyzed as an alternative in the EIR.*
- Would like to have meetings prior to Task Force meetings, so Task Force can see TAC comments. *Susan indicated the Task Force is still discussing the Initial Draft, and the TAC’s comment will be forwarded to the Task Force at their next meeting.*
- Need to start discussions with the County regarding the acquisition of land along Coyote Creek.

The public provided the following questions and comments:

- How is the Plan going to protect endangered species if it is not part of the HCP? *Susan indicated that the City is an active participant in the HCP process, and the information in the EIR will be used in the HCP.*
- Are the locations of fire departments identified in the Plan? *Susan indicated there are two fire stations planned in Coyote Valley, and pointed out the two locations on the map.*
- Are archaeological findings included in the Initial Draft? Have the Native representatives been contacted? *Susan indicated that the City has consulted the Native American representatives, and the information would be provided in the EIR.*
- Are the EIR and HCP working together? *Yes.*

Question #3: How can we improve the integration of workplace land uses throughout the Plan? Is there an adequate amount of workplace land use in the Plan? The existing General Plan calls for about 1,400 acres of Campus industrial land use in the north portion of Coyote Valley to accommodate 50,000 jobs, whereas the CVSP calls for 564 acres with a range of workplace

intensities, together with some workplace uses in the mixed use areas).

The TAC provided the following questions and comments:

- The Cisco General Plan Amendment indicates there needs to be 20,000 jobs in Coyote Valley, not 50,000. *Susan indicated the existing General Plan text indicates there must be 50,000 campus industrial jobs in Coyote Valley. Bill added that there would be 20,000 jobs north of Bailey as part of the CVRP project.*
- Should be more jobs near the Caltrain station to reduce traffic on Bailey over the Hill.
- Should reduce surface parking lots.
- The Plan would not work unless the jobs and housing are developed together.
- People like to live close to where they work.
- The plan is good.
- Would like to see a state-of-the-art high school.
- Need to make the Greenbelt work.
- What is the timing for agreement on triggers? *Susan indicated there is no proposal to change the triggers. The current General Plan triggers require 5,000 new jobs added in North Coyote and a stable fiscal environment prior to any residential development in North and Mid Coyote. There will be more discussion on phasing after the Draft EIR is released.*
- Gavilan College should remain designated workplace industrial. It should be analyzed as workplace.
- Page 24 and 28 of the Initial Draft should note that the requirement for industry-driving jobs and non-industry driving jobs goes beyond the City Council requirement.
- Should not use the Sphere of Influence to determine the number of jobs required.
- Cannot make an assumption about the amount of affordable housing needed without knowing the demand for it.
- Questioned the use of the term, “alleviate” (pg. 140 in Initial Draft) in the discussion of San Jose’s housing sale costs.

The public provided the following questions and comments:

- Would the jobs and housing be built simultaneously? *Susan indicated that phasing and financing strategy will be developed in the next few months.*
- Concerned with the job/housing balance. Would people be commuting in and out of Coyote Valley? *Susan indicated the Coyote Valley Specific Plan is intended to improve the jobs/housing balance in the City, and that there would be some people commuting into Coyote Valley.*

Question #4: How can we improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation and connectivity between land uses, neighborhoods and civic and community uses? (especially along the parkway and between the east and west sides of Monterey Road).

The TAC provided the following questions and comments:

- There are fiscal barriers to extend the VTA into Coyote Valley.

- VTA submitted written comments to Staff on March 15, 2007 (see “Attachment A”).
- The Caltrain tracks in Coyote Valley are owned by Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR); UPRR is difficult to work with.
- There would be modest ridership at the Coyote Valley station, similar to the Sunnyvale station. *Stan indicated that the EIR would analyze ridership, but the City needs to work closely with VTA in the plan refinement process.*
- Monterey Road and the railroad tracks present an obstacle for pedestrian access between the east and west side of Coyote Valley.
- Unclear how the pedestrian and bicycle access functions between east and west Coyote Valley, particularly at the end of the Central Commons. *Susan indicated that improved connectivity would be reviewed as a part of the plan refinement process. Roger added that some details regarding bridges and pedestrian crossings, are in the Planning Area Detail Appendix.*
- How does Morgan Hill Unified School District (MHUSD) feel about the walkability to schools? *Susan indicated that staff has worked closely with the MHUSD to improve walkability and the land plan has changed from discussions at those meetings.*
- Would the in-valley transit be included in the first phase of the Plan? *Susan indicated the phasing plan is still in process and there have been discussions regarding implementing portions of the BRT in the early phase. Roger added that no tracking is needed for the fixed guideway, just concrete. Bill added that the guideway can be built in pieces, but it is important to build it early so people can use the transit.*
- Pedestrian overpasses need to be attractive and well-lit with signage. *Susan indicated that the Plan would take that into consideration and there would be some crossings at grade at roundabouts. Roger added there are some cross-sections of overpasses in the Planning Area Detail Appendix. Bill added they are still designing the grading of the parkway to ensure a secure environment.*
- Walkability studies indicate people are willing to walk further to a transit stop if the walk is pleasant. The quality of the walk is more important than the distance.
- Should consider active senior design in the Plan.
- Should consider handicap accessibility in the Plan.

The public provided the following questions and comments:

- Does the Plan include two high schools? *Susan indicated that the Plan currently provides for two high schools on one campus, and staff will be meeting with MHUSD to discuss the number and location of high schools in Coyote Valley.*
- Is there enough funding for light rail and Caltrain in Coyote Valley? *Susan explained that there is no plan for light rail extension into Coyote Valley and the Plan proposes Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in a fixed guideway. Bill indicated the Plan relies on Caltrain for commuters outside of Coyote Valley.*
- Would there need to be more infrastructure for cars if there is no outside connectivity? *The BRT will connect to the existing VTA bus service in Coyote Valley, and there are also two additional freeway interchanges (plus the existing Bailey Avenue interchange) and a Caltrain station proposed.*

Question #5: Past Task Force discussions have suggested that the Plan's land use designations should be "more flexible." We would appreciate additional elaboration from the TAC on this idea. How can we make the CVSP land use designations more flexible while still meeting the City Council Vision and Expected Outcomes and our "smart growth" objective? (e.g. consolidating/reducing land use designations with minimum densities and FARs, etc.)

The TAC provided the following questions and comments:

- The Plan should have a lighter footprint.
- Suggested a larger setback along Coyote Creek.
- Should include drought tolerant plants.
- Should be a more flexible lifestyle rather than a dense urban environment. High-rise development is a problem.
- What is the Task Force's reasoning for more flexibility? *Susan indicated the Task Force would like the Plan to be friendlier to corporate users, and not to discourage workplace uses. There are several workplace designations and different specifications and FAR ranges. They also want more flexibility for residential densities.*
- How would the Plan meet the jobs/housing goal if there is too much flexibility? There should be a tracking tool to assure the goals are met.
- Suggested having a five-year review to check how the Plan is meeting objectives.
- Flexibility makes people more accountable to ensure goals are met.
- If objectives are not met, then do not do the Plan. The City should "get it right" or not do it.
- Suggested decreasing the number of land uses, but have a wider spread of FARs.
- The Plan should provide more lower density one story residences for seniors.

The public provided the following questions and comments:

- Need to have an enforcement tool to ensure goals are carried out.
- Do not want to minimize densities. Would discourage businesses from locating in Coyote Valley.
- Need to have a minimum of 4 parking spaces per 1,000 square-feet in the workplace areas. A company would not locate in Coyote Valley unless there is sufficient parking.
- Flexibility is important to respond to the market.
- Would all corporate users be LEED certified? *Susan indicated that many green building and sustainability measures are built into the Plan to enable certification, but LEED certification would not be required.*

5. Open Forum/Other Issues

The public provided the following questions and comments:

- What would be the cost of the lake? *Susan indicated the lake would be financed as part of the public realm by property owners and developers. More information would be provided in the finance and implementation plan which is under preparation.*

- Should include information about parking pricing.

6. Adjourn

Eileen Goodwin thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. They will schedule a TAC meeting within the Draft EIR comment period to obtain comments on the Draft EIR. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 5:00 PM.

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Attachment A

Attachment A

Letter from Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), dated March 15, 2007

Dear Susan,

Thank you for allowing VTA staff the opportunity to review and comment on the Coyote Valley Specific Plan. The Coyote Valley proposal appears to be a unique opportunity for San Jose to build a community rich in urban amenities while upholding to the sustainable vision of the 21st century.

The following are a list of comments we would like the City of San Jose staff to reconsider and/or address to ensure the Coyote Valley visions are carried forward with the least complications in the future.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Circulation

- VTA thinks it is great that CV is focusing on a walk- and bicyclable centric community. However it does not address the types of protection offered to these commuters during winter months when it is raining. Perhaps store fronts should be required to have awnings so pedestrians are protected from the rain.
- The road network within the community core should be designed such that the travel time by foot or bike is equivalent to or better than the travel time to make the same trip by car.
- Eliminating left turns is a good way to reduce the width of intersections; however it does have the potential to create road rage causing drivers to become irritated. In addition to making the environment attractive to pedestrians and bicyclists there should be an emphasis to create a street network that reminds drivers that they are sharing the road network. This can be accomplished by adding such things as pavement colorings at intersections, in-street pedestrian crossings signs and/or in-road warning lights at major crosswalks.

Parking

- Based on p.22 it sounds like the CV Transit Station will be used as a rail hub for commuters outside the CV community; however, the parking section does not address how the community will deal with Park and Ride lots near transit stations.
- VTA staff appreciates that CV is trying to minimize the number of parking spaces available in the community. The idea of consolidating spaces to shared parking conforms to the ideas set in the Community Design and Transportation Manual. However, VTA staff are concerned that parking size should not be compromised to accommodate additional spaces. Motorists should not feel frustrated parking tight parking spaces. VTA is not suggesting all parking spaces need to be designed for big vehicles but there should be a balance between the parking spaces available.
- There needs to be a discussion of bicycle parking in the CV community. Is CV planning on providing parking, are there going to be bicycle lockers at major transit hubs, will bicycle parking be available throughout the community or just at key locations, etc. ?

Transit

BRT

- VTA likes the idea of having a fun circulator transit system for the Coyote Valley community. However, VTA would like the Specific Plan and EIR to clearly state that the service will be completely funded and operated by the Coyote Valley community and not VTA.

LRT

- Page 81 indicates VTA LRT may extend to CV in the future, and continue within the community. VTA is not comfortable with this statement, as at this time VTA has no plans nor have we considered extending LRT to CV.
- VTA Board recently adopted criteria necessary for extension of LRT lines in the county. VTA can only justify extensions when new service meets a set of ridership criteria that allows the agency to meet their farebox recovery goal of 25%. All new service expansion is subject to this criteria and must be evaluated before VTA can consider expansion. At this time VTA has no plans to extend LRT to CV. Please indicate any LRT service considerations will only be considered within the CV community and will be funded solely using CV funding sources. In the future – 2040 – VTA may reevaluate their position to expand LRT to CV based on ridership forecast.

Caltrain

- There is a significant gap between the vision and prominence presented in the Plan of the Caltrain Station in Coyote Valley and the numbers being generated by the VTA model. VTA's 2030 projection is 3700 entries and exits or 1850 daily boardings. This puts the station in the same range as current Sunnyvale boardings and significantly less than Palo Alto, Mountain View and Diridon. Therefore it is hard to rectify this relatively healthy but modest ridership with the statements on pg.48 of the CVSP regarding the Station busy with "commuters going into and out of the Valley, visitors and luggage arriving and departing via train" etc. The authors are obviously trying to paint a picture for the public of a bustling eastern style commuter rail station while at best this will be a Caltrain Station that in 2030 looks like Sunnyvale today. (Caltrain has an obligation to provide safe, reliable service with the least travel time delays. Adding a station shall only be considered if Caltrain can justify ridership exceeds the travel delays associated with stopping at the station).

- Caltrain operations - Caltrain now runs 3 round trips (Northbound in the AM, Southbound in the PM) to South Santa Clara County. We have the ability to increase this to 5 round trips and 7 round trips with completion of Measure A funded improvements, and further ability to "purchase" additional slots from UPRR for a total of 10 round trips. The ability to actually operate this service depends to VTA working with its JPB partners to pay the additional costs of operation (i.e. VTA most likely pays this cost). As always these costs will be measured against supporting the complete range of VTA services on an annual basis. It should be noted that in previous discussions with UPRR, the idea of operating reverse commute service has been rebuffed. This is not necessarily a determination that would impact a long-range vision plan but in reality, VTA would have to pay UPRR more money and make more track and signal improvements to operate reverse commute.
- Caltrain capital - The cost of a Coyote Valley Station has been estimated at \$14 million. This cost estimate does not support the vision (pg. 48) of "monumental landscape and hardscape" or "outstanding sculptural form" or a pedestrian bridge crossing Monterey Highway. This merely supports a simple platform, stock shelters, signal and trackwork. The question still to be answered, and the CVSP is silent on this issue, is how will any of these improvements be funded.

Heavy Rail

- On pg. 22 and 81 there is a reference to the San Jose Council supporting High Speed Rail (HSR) on Monterey Road. The implication is that this matters to Coyote Valley. It should be clarified that under any circumstance HSR will not stop in Coyote Valley and it really makes no difference to the development.

Air

- The plan mentions helicopter service may be supported by CVSP corporations. If this is the case, should there be some landing ground available within the community to accommodate air traffic.

General

- Will the funds from the financing district be used to Travel Demand Management measures such as offering residents and businesses transit use incentive programs like the eco-pass?
- The reality gap between the CVSP's transit vision and what can really be accomplished is best illustrated on pg. 144, Appendix 9: Transportation Demand Management Measures, which I guess is the City's opening gambit of what they expect developers to fund on behalf of transit. In this Appendix, is the usual menu of "easy-to-implement" improvements such as duckouts, shelters, kiosks, bicycle storage etc. A concession is made to providing shuttle services. The Appendix is silent on how the massive transit infrastructure is to be funded on both the capital and operating sides.
- The CVSP presents a vision to the public and policy makers of a development served by robust rail transit connections to the region but stays silent on the issues of implementation. In my opinion, VTA should request that a modified vision be presented of a CVSP in a "financially constrained" environment of no Caltrain station and only transit services that developer fees are able to support to present a different and again in my opinion, more realistic view to the public.

